

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 IO-14 DHA-02 /085 W

-----061921Z 085104 /44

R 061600Z JUN 77

FM AMCONSUL MONTREAL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9039

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMCONSUL QUEBEC

AMCONSUL TORONTO

UNCLAS MONTREAL 906

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, CA

SUBJ: FRANCOPHONES JOIN LANGUAGE POLICY DEBATE

REF: MONTREAL 791

1. LEADERS OF THE FRANCOPHONE COMMUNITY WENT PUBLIC OVER THE WEEKEND ON PROPOSED LANGUAGE LEGISLATION (BILL ONE). AS REFTEL INDICATED LIKELY, REACTIONS WERE MIXED.

2. SOME 326 PERSONS, PROMINENT LARGELY BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY IN BUSINESS, SENT AN "OPEN LETTER" TO PREMIER LEVESQUE AND CULTURAL MINISTER OF STATE LAURIN (AND TO THE PRESS) PROTESTING THE BILL. THEY DESCRIBED IT AS SHOWING A SOCIETY OF DISTRUST RATHER THAN OF CONFIDENCE AND SAID THAT THE ATTITUDE THAT THE FRANCOPHONE QUEBECKER IS INCAPABLE OF PLAYING A DOMINANT ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIS CULTURE AND LANGUAGE WITHOUT THE TRUSTEESHIP OF THE STATE IS "AN INSULT TO OUR ORIGINALITY AND TO OUR PRIDE." THEY DEPLORED THE ADVERSE EFFECTS THE BILL WILL HAVE ON QUEBEC'S ECONOMY. THEY ASSAILED ITS INFRINGEMENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS. NOT LEAST, THEY CLAIMED THAT IF ENGLISH-LANGUAGE TEACHING IN FRENCH SCHOOLS IS NOT IMPROVED, FRANCOPHONE QUEBECKERS WILL WIND UP

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"FUNCTIONALLY ILLITERATE." THEY DO, OF COURSE, APPLAUD THE BASIC INTENT OF THE BILL TO MAKE FRENCH THE NORMAL MEDIUM OF COMMUNICATION AT WORK AND IN SCHOOLS.

3. LETTER AND NAMES OF SIGNATORIES REPRINTED IN FULL IN LE DEVOIR AND MONTREAL STAR; COPY BEING SENT EUR/CAN. AMONG PROMINENT SIGNERS NOTED BY PAPERS NOT CARRYING FULL LIST ARE:

PAUL DESMARAI, CHAIRMAN OF POWER CORP.; LOUIS DESMARAI,  
PRESIDENT OF CANADA STEAMSHIP LINES; RETIRED SENATOR THERESE  
CASGRAIN; FORMER (LIBERAL) SOCIAL AFFAIRS MINISTER CLAUDE  
CASTONGUAY. ALL STRESSED THEY WERE SINGING AS INDIVIDUALS, NOT  
FOR THEIR ORGANIZATIONS.

4. MEDIA CARRIED, SAME DAY, STORY OF 160 OTHER WELL-KNOWN  
FRANCOPHONES, LARGELY IN THE ARTS AND SCIENCES, WHO SENT LETTER OF  
SUPPORT FOR BILL. TEXT NOT CARRIED IN FULL YET BUT MOST NOTED  
NAMES OF REPORTED SIGNERS INCLUDE PLAYWRIGHT MICHEL TREMBLAY;  
YVES MARTIN, RECTOR OF UNIVERSITY OF SHERBROOKE; SINGER FELIX  
LECLERC. LETTERS PUT AT ODDS TWO OF QUEBEC'S GREATEST HEROES AND  
FORMER TEAMMATES FROM LES CANADIENS, JEAN BELIVEAU WHO SIGNED THE  
PROTEST AND MAURICE RICHARD WHO SIGNED SUPPORT COMMUNIQUE.

5. ALL PAPERS FRONT-PAGED PROTEST. BOTH FRENCH AND ENGLISH MEDIA  
GAVE LESSER PLAY TO SUPPORTING LETTER.

6. COMMENT: THIS HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY TICKLISH ISSUE FOR  
FRANCOPHONES WHO FEEL BILL IS EXTREME, IN VIEW UNDERSTANDABLE  
RELUCTANCE PUT ONESELF UP A "TREASONOUS" TARGET. PROTEST  
SIGNATORIES STRESS IN THEIR LETTER THEY GRANT NO ON THE RIGHT  
TO ACCUSE THEM OF TREACHERY TO THEIR LANGUAGE OR PLACE IN QUEBEC  
FRANCOPHONE COMMUNITY BECAUSE OF THEIR POSITION IN THIS MATTER.  
MINISTER LAURIN'S PREDICTABLE RESPONSE HAS BEEN THAT THEY "ARE ALL  
FEDERALISTS AND MEMBERS OF THE QUEBEC LIBERAL PARTY WHO WOULD  
OF COURSE SUPPORT THE ANGLOPHONES." SEVERAL FRIENDS AMONG SIGNERS  
HAVE SAID LIST RELATIVELY SHORT NOT ONLY FOR LACK OF TIME  
BUT BECAUSE THEY WANTED QUALITY RATHER THAN QUANTITY -- A MAJOR  
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IMPACT WITH MAJOR NAMES. THEY SPECULATE "ADHERERS" LIST MAY  
FOLLOW.  
HARPER

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PUBLIC DISCLOSURE, AGREEMENTS, DEBATES, PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE, OFFICIAL LANGUAGE, LEGISLATIVE BILLS  
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**Original Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Subject:** FRANCOPHONES JOIN LANGUAGE POLICY DEBATE  
**TAGS:** PINT, CA  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
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